



2017 MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt): State Summary of Participation and Achievement

December 2017

[Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#)

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Purpose of this Document

This report provides a summary of the statewide participation rates and achievement results of students with significant disabilities who participated in the 2017 MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt). The MCAS-Alt evaluates and reports on the annual achievement of those students in meeting state standards and provides parents and teachers with vital information to assist in planning students' instructional programs and monitoring their progress. In 2017, 8,314 students in grades 3–12 participated in the MCAS-Alt. This number represents *all* students who submitted a portfolio, including first-year English learners (ELs), high school students resubmitting their portfolios in grades 11–12, and grade 9 students who took high school Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) tests in 2016 whose results are included in 2017.

This report includes the results of 8,532 students who participated for the first time in the ELA and Mathematics assessments in grades 3–8 and 10, and who took an STE assessment either in grade 9 in 2016 or in grade 10 in 2017, for the purpose of determining school, district, and state accountability.

Students with significant disabilities are required by law to participate in statewide academic assessments and to be counted in overall achievement results. The Commonwealth is required to publicly report the aggregated results of all students, including those who participated in MCAS-Alt, in order to hold accountable schools, districts, and the state for the achievement of *all* students, and when determining whether each Massachusetts school and district is making progress toward reducing proficiency gaps.

In 2017, among students participating in MCAS-Alt (not including students who are resubmitting a high school portfolio or who are first-year ELs), approximately 71 percent of portfolios earned a score at the *Progressing* achievement level. The percentage of portfolios at this level indicates that most students with significant disabilities are being provided with challenging educational opportunities to address the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and are achieving their academic goals with a high degree of accuracy and independence.

Table of Contents

Purpose of this Document

Executive SummaryError! Bookmark not defined.

I. Introduction.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

II. BackgroundError! Bookmark not defined.

Participation Guidelines.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

Portfolio Contents and Structure.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

Scoring MCAS-Alt Portfolios.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

III. Student Participation in 2017 MCAS-Alt.....Error! Bookmark not defined.

IV. 2017 MCAS-Alt Student ResultsError! Bookmark not defined.

V. Grade-Level PortfoliosError! Bookmark not defined.

VI. Competency Determination Portfolios11

VII.MCAS-Alt and Accountability: PPI DeterminationsError! Bookmark not defined.

VIII.Resources and Professional Development for EducatorsError! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix A. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results by Grade and Subject Error! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix B. 2017 Standard Tests and MCAS-Alt Participation by Grade and Subject Error! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix C. 2017 Participation Rate and Method of Participation by Students with DisabilitiesError! Bookmark not defined.

Appendix D. MCAS-Alt Achievement Levels and Descriptors20

Appendix E. 2017 MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio StrandsError! Bookmark not defined.

Executive Summary

The participation and achievement of students with disabilities in the 2017 MCAS-Alt administration are summarized below. Please see the appendices for results in each grade and subject, and for Achievement Levels and Descriptors.

- The number of students in grades 3–8 and 10 who participated in an alternate assessment in at least one content area was 8,242, or 1.6 percent of the total tested population. The overall number has decreased for the fifth consecutive year. The percentage of students with disabilities who participated in MCAS-Alt was 8.6 percent of all students with disabilities, which represents a 0.4 percent decrease from 2016.
- In English Language Arts (ELA), 61.1 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level, an increase of 4.2 percentage points from 2016, when 56.9 percent did so. The highest achievement in ELA was at grade 4, where 65.4 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level. By contrast, the lowest achievement in ELA was at grade 10, where 56.3 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level.
- In Mathematics, 77.8 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level, a decrease of 3 percentage points from 2016, when 80.8 percent did so. The highest achievement in Mathematics was at grade 4, where 84.1 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level. By contrast, the lowest achievement was at grade 10, where 67.8 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level.
- In Science and Technology/Engineering (STE), averaged across grades 5, 8, and 10, 76.2 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level, a decrease of 3.1 percentage points from 2016, when 79.3 percent of students did so. The highest achievement in STE was at grade 5, where 79.6 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level. In grade 10, 68.9 percent of students performed at the *Progressing* level, a decrease of 0.5 percentage points from 2016.
- Between 2016 and 2017, student achievement in ELA at the *Emerging* level, one level below *Progressing*, decreased by 3.9 percentage points from 36.1 to 32.2. In Mathematics, students performing at the *Emerging* level increased marginally by 0.2 percent to 8.3. In STE, 12.9 percent of students performed at the *Emerging* level, an increase of 1.1 percentage points from 2016, when 11.8 percent of students did so.
- Student achievement at the *Awareness* level, one level below *Emerging*, was effectively unchanged in 2017 and within 0.3 percentage points of results from 2016 in all grades and subjects.
- For the fourth consecutive year, the percentage of students whose portfolios were determined to be *Incomplete* decreased in ELA. Between 2016 and 2017, averaged across all grades, the percentage in ELA decreased from 5.3 to 5.0; increased by 2.6 percentage points in Mathematics to 12.6; and increased by two percentage points to 10.0 in STE. The continued increase in the percentage of ELA portfolios submitted with all required evidence and information suggests a greater awareness of portfolio submission requirements by educators conducting the MCAS-Alt.

Table 1. 2017 MCAS-Alt Statewide Results by Subject

Subject/ (Grades)	MCAS-Alt Achievement Level										Total MCAS-Alt Portfolios
	Awareness		Emerging		Progressing		Needs Improvement (or Higher)		Incomplete		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Number
ELA (3–8, and 10)	131	1.7	2,551	32.2	4,839	61.1	1	< 1	395	5.0	7,917
Mathematics (3–8, and 10)	94	1.2	665	8.3	6,211	77.8	2	< 1	1,008	12.6	7,980
Science and Technology/ Engineering* (5, 8, and 9/10)	18	.6	377	12.9	2,236	76.2	9	< 1	293	10.0	2,933

* Results of students who took one of the four high school STE tests in 2016 when they were in grade 9 are included in the 2017 grade 9/10 High School STE results listed above. However, results for grade 9 students who participated in 2017 high school STE tests will not be summarized for official school, district, or state reporting until 2018, when they will be included with the results of grade 10 students who took one of the four STE tests in 2018. Grade 10 STE results include only students continuously enrolled in the state from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10.

I. Introduction

This report describes the statewide participation rates and achievement results from the spring 2017 administration of the MCAS-Alt in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering. The MCAS-Alt has been administered annually since spring 2001 and is offered in every subject and grade for which a statewide academic assessment is required.

This report also presents information on students who participated in the MCAS-Alt, including the nature of their disabilities, their participation relative to students taking standard tests, and the methods used to evaluate student portfolios and report student scores and achievement levels.

State summaries of MCAS-Alt for 2001–2017 are available on the Department’s [website](#).

II. Background

According to state and federal laws, all students, including students with disabilities, are required to participate in statewide assessments. Student with significant disabilities who are unable to take the standard tests, even with accommodations, must take the MCAS-Alt. Decisions as to how each student with a disability will participate in MCAS are made by the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and documented in the student’s IEP, or in a 504 plan developed by the school or district. Information about the participation of students with disabilities in MCAS is available on the Department’s [website](#).

For each student scheduled to participate in the MCAS-Alt, schools must submit a portfolio consisting of instructional data charts and work samples based on the grade-level content found in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks that has been modified to reflect challenging and attainable entry points for each student. The basis for modifying academic curriculum for students taking the MCAS-Alt is described in the [*Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities*](#).

The purposes of the MCAS-Alt are to:

- ensure that students with significant disabilities are receiving a program of instruction based on the state’s academic standards;
- determine how much knowledge and skills based on the curriculum frameworks students with significant disabilities have learned;
- include difficult-to-assess students in statewide assessment and accountability systems;
- provide alternative pathways for some students with disabilities to earn a comparable score to a student in grades 3–8 who has taken a standard test in that subject, and in high school to earn a Competency Determination (CD) and become eligible to receive a diploma.

Participation Guidelines

A student with a *significant cognitive disability* is considered for an alternate assessment by his or her IEP team, when he or she:

- receives routine academic instruction based on learning standards in the curriculum frameworks for which the levels of complexity of content and skills have been modified substantially below the expectations of a non-disabled student enrolled in the same grade;
AND
- receives intensive, individualized instruction across all settings in which a subject is taught, in order for the student to acquire, generalize, and demonstrate knowledge and skills;
AND
- is generally unable to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a standardized paper-and-pencil test in the subject being assessed, even when accommodations are provided.

In addition, students with other complex and significant disabilities may be considered for an alternate assessment based on *grade-level* (rather than *alternate*) achievement standards if their disabilities would present unique and significant challenges to fully demonstrating their knowledge and skills on a standardized paper-and-pencil test, even if accommodations were provided.

Using the criteria listed above, a student on a 504 plan may also be designated for an alternate assessment, which should be documented in the plan.

MCAS-Alt and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

This federal education law, passed in December 2015 and effective in the 2017–2018 school year, imposes a statewide cap of one percent of all students eligible for statewide testing on those taking alternate assessments based on *alternate achievement standards*. (Note: This cap does not include “grade-level” or “competency” portfolios; only students taking the basic MCAS-Alt who are achieving well-below grade-level expectations are included in the 1 percent).

The Commissioner posted guidelines based on the new restrictions in March 2017 and requested that districts review their recent data on students taking the MCAS-Alt. If a district projects that more than one percent of students would take the MCAS-Alt in 2017–2018, a justification in writing must be provided to the Department, plus assurances that IEP teams will be retrained annually on the updated guidelines provided by the Department. IEP team training materials are available, as is a sample parent notification letter (translated into five languages) required by ESSA to be sent by districts informing parents of students for whom the MCAS-Alt was proposed that their “child’s participation in an alternate assessment may eventually delay or affect their ability to complete the state’s requirements for a high school diploma, since the MCAS-Alt assesses learning standards that are below the expectations needed to earn the Competency Determination.” Information and materials regarding the new ESSA “one percent” requirement are available on the Department’s [MCAS-Alt web page](#).

Portfolio Contents and Structure

“Evidence” is collected by the student’s teacher(s) and other school staff throughout the year in the subject being assessed, and organized in a portfolio that includes the following types of products and information:

- Work samples, video clips, and/or photographs documenting the student’s performance of tasks based on the standards being assessed.
- Data charts (except for the ELA–Writing assessment) documenting the student’s accuracy and independence over a period of time performing activities based on the learning standards being assessed. Data must be collected during at least 8 different instructional activities and must begin at a level of *accuracy* and/or *independence* below 80 percent in order to demonstrate that the student was taught challenging new skills, knowledge, and concepts. *Accuracy* is considered to be the percentage of correct student responses, and *independence* the percentage of tasks, items, or activities requiring *no* assistance to the student in responding.
- Supporting documentation, including descriptions provided by the teacher, reflection sheets that allow the student to evaluate his/her own performance, and other evidence that indicates the context of the instruction and/or the method of demonstrating knowledge and skills in the subject being assessed.

The development of portfolios is guided by information found in the [Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt](#), which is updated annually, distributed at Department-sponsored training events, and posted on the Department’s [website](#).

Scoring MCAS-Alt Portfolios

Once portfolios are submitted to the Department each spring, they are reviewed and scored by scorers who are supervised by Department staff and their expert trainers. Prospective scorers receive extensive training and must qualify to become scorers. Scorers are monitored closely for accuracy and consistency throughout the scoring process. The Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands, shown in Appendix E, is used as the basis for scoring student portfolios, as well as the [Guidelines for Scoring MCAS-Alt Portfolios](#). Portfolios that lack the minimum required evidence and provide insufficient information are scored *Incomplete*.

Once preliminary scores are provided to districts in mid-June, a score appeals process allows a school to initiate a request to rescore portions of a portfolio, based on a perceived inaccuracy in the preliminary scoring. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Department staff and its contractor review the student’s portfolio and if necessary, rescore the section(s) in question. Scores may not be changed after the score appeals process is completed in late June.

III. Student Participation in 2017 MCAS-Alt

A total of 8,242 students in grades 3–8 and 10, or 1.6 percent of the total assessed population, participated in the MCAS-Alt in one or more content areas, as shown in Table 2. In grades 3–8, between 1.5 and 1.9 percent of students were alternately assessed in ELA, Mathematics, and grade 5 and 8 STE. At the high school level, 1.3 percent of students participated in the MCAS-Alt in ELA, Mathematics, and STE. See Appendix B for the MCAS-Alt participation rates in each grade and subject.

Between 7 and 9 percent of all assessed students with disabilities in each grade participated in the 2017 MCAS-Alt. See Appendix C for comparative rates of participation in each MCAS assessment format (i.e., routinely tested, tested with accommodations, or alternately assessed) by subject.

Table 2. Rate of Participation in MCAS-Alt by Students with Disabilities in Grades 3–8 and 10 in at Least One Content Area

Year	Total Students Taking MCAS-Alt	Percentage of All Assessed Students Taking MCAS-Alt	Percentage of Students with Disabilities Taking MCAS-Alt
2004	5,139	1.0%	5.5%
2005	6,131	1.2%	6.4%
2006	7,006	1.3%	7.7%
2007	7,621	1.4%	8.4%
2008	8,199	1.5%	8.4%
2009	8,738	1.6%	9.0%
2010	9,286	1.7%	9.1%
2011	9,325	1.7%	8.6%
2012	9,386	1.7%	8.8%
2013	9,111	1.7%	9.3%
2014	8,896	1.6%	8.9%
2015	8,650	1.7%	8.9%
2016	8,373	1.7%	9.0%
2017	8,242	1.6%	8.6%

Table 3 shows the number of students with disabilities who took the 2017 MCAS-Alt in each grade and subject.

Table 3. Participation in 2017 MCAS-Alt by Grade and Subject

Grade	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science and Technology/ Engineering
3	1207	1187	–
4	1198	1211	–
5	1282	1291	1,187
6	1154	1168	–
7	1074	1090	–
8	1100	1123	1,070
9*	–	–	217
10	902	910	676
Total	7,917	7,980	3,150

*Participation for grade 9 students in one of the four high school STE tests is shown here but is not summarized for 2017 official school, district, or state reporting. The results of grade 9 students who participated in 2017 will be included next year with grade 10 students who took one of the four STE tests in 2018.

2017 Standard MCAS and MCAS-Alt Participation by Nature of Disability

Table 4 shows the distribution of primary disabilities among standard MCAS and MCAS-Alt participants. Approximately seventy-six percent of students who took MCAS-Alt had an **intellectual disability, autism, or multiple disabilities**, while seventy-eight percent of students who took standard MCAS had a **communication, emotional, health, or a specific learning disability**. See table 4 below and the pie chart on page 12 for students assessed in each of the primary disability categories.

Table 4. Nature of Primary Disability Among 2017 Standard MCAS and MCAS-Alt Participants in Grades 3–10^a

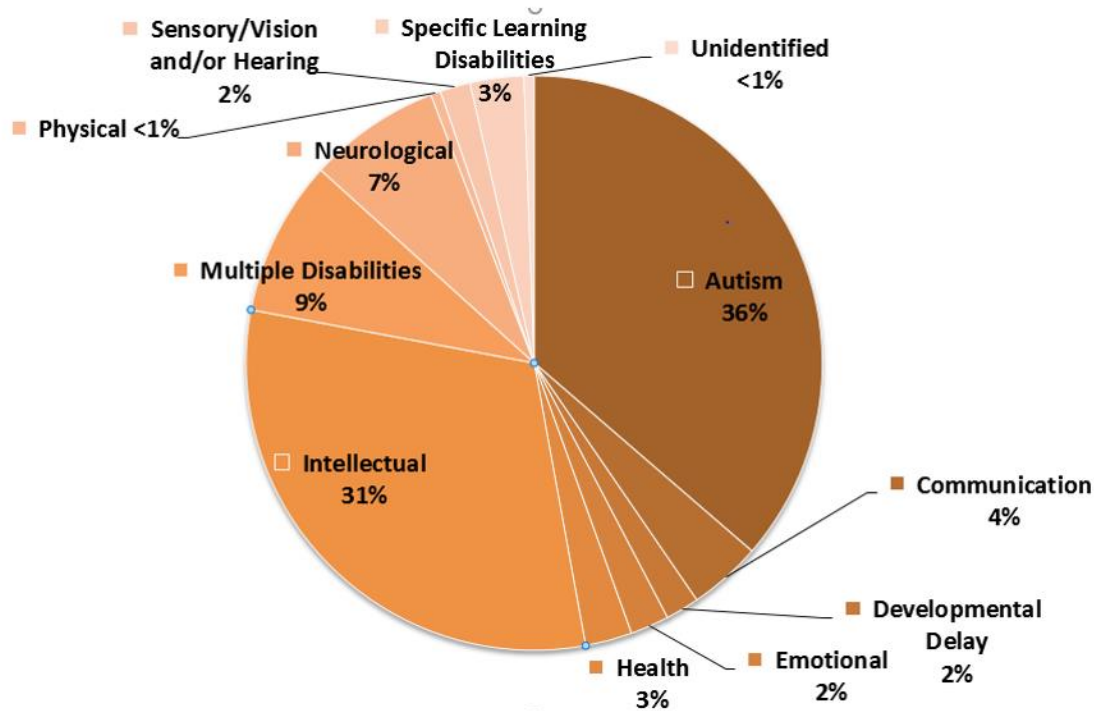
Primary Disability ^b	Number of Standard MCAS Participants in Primary Disability Category (n)	Percentage of Standard MCAS Participants in Primary Disability Category (n/87,504) ^c	Number of MCAS-Alt Participants in Primary Disability Category (n)	Percentage of MCAS-Alt Participants in Primary Disability Category (n/8,242) ^c
Autism	6,756	7.7%	2,997	36.4%
Communication	12,710	14.5%	337	4.1%
Developmental Delay	1,440	1.6%	156	1.9%
Emotional	9,599	11.0%	179	2.2%
Health	15,312	17.5%	216	2.6%
Intellectual	2,178	2.5%	2,541	30.8%
Multiple Disabilities	1,030	1.2%	722	8.8%
Neurological	5,800	6.6%	613	7.4%
Physical	500	0.6%	46	0.6%
Sensory/Deaf and Blind	47	0.1%	21	0.3%
Sensory/Hard of Hearing or Deaf	533	0.6%	93	1.1%
Sensory/Vision Impairment or Blind	302	0.3%	26	0.3%
Specific Learning Disabilities	31,159	35.6%	248	3.0%
Unidentified Disability	138	0.2%	47	0.6%
Total	87,504		8,242	

^a The number of standard MCAS and MCAS-Alt participants includes all students who took MCAS-Alt for accountability purposes in at least one subject.

^b Primary disability data were reported by districts to the Department's Student Information Management System (SIMS) in March and June 2017.

^c Percentages of participants by primary disability category may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

2017 MCAS-Alt Participation by Nature of Disability



2017

MCAS-Alt Student Results

On school and district rosters of results, MCAS-Alt scores are reported in the lowest achievement level on the standard MCAS tests: *Not Meeting Expectations* in ELA and Mathematics in grades 3–8; *Failing* in grade 10 ELA, Mathematics, and high school STE; and *Warning* in grades 5 and 8 STE.

For diagnostic and educational planning purposes, MCAS-Alt results are reported in the following three MCAS-Alt achievement levels: *Progressing*, *Emerging*, and *Awareness*. These three MCAS-Alt achievement levels provide meaningful information to interpret the achievement of students whose performance is below grade-level.

See Appendix D for descriptions of the MCAS-Alt achievement levels.

In 2017, the majority of students with significant disabilities performed at the *Progressing* level, indicating that they demonstrated the attainment of challenging academic goals at high levels of accuracy and independence, although below the grade-level expectations for nondisabled students. Results for the 2017 MCAS-Alt administration are summarized below.

- In grades 3–8 and 10, the percentage of students who scored *Progressing* was:
 - 61.1 percent in ELA
 - 77.8 percent in Mathematics
 - 76.2 percent in Science and Technology/Engineering*

- The percentage of students who scored *Emerging* was:
 - 32.2 percent in ELA
 - 8.3 percent in Mathematics
 - 12.9 percent in Science and Technology/Engineering*
- The percentage of students who scored *Awareness* was:
 - 1.7 percent in ELA
 - 1.2 percent in Mathematics
 - 0.6 percent in Science and Technology/Engineering*
- Overall, 9 percent of students who participated in the MCAS-Alt portfolio scored *Incomplete* in at least one subject, indicating that the portfolio did not include the requisite evidence to generate an overall achievement level in the subject being assessed. The percentage of students who scored *Incomplete* by content area was:
 - 5 percent in ELA
 - 12.6 percent in Mathematics
 - 10 percent in Science and Technology/Engineering*

Appendix A displays achievement level results by grade and subject.

*Results for grade 9 students who participated in one of the four high school STE tests are not included here or summarized for official school, district, or state reporting until 2018, when they will be included with grade 10 students who took one of the four STE tests in 2018. Grade 10 results include only students continuously enrolled in the state from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10.

V. Grade-level Portfolios

A relatively small number of students who achieve grade-level expectations in their classwork, but who are unable to participate in standard MCAS tests even with the use of accommodations, due to the nature and severity of their disabilities, are encouraged to submit a “grade-level” MCAS-Alt portfolio (i.e., an alternate assessment based on *grade-level* achievement standards).

Grade-level portfolios require students to submit a range of work samples that address all aspects of selected standards in each content area that show evidence of the student’s thinking and independent problem-solving.

Students who demonstrate grade-level knowledge and skills on the grade 10 ELA or mathematics, or on the grade 5, 8, or high school STE test and who submit grade-level portfolios, are eligible to earn a score equivalent to a student who scores *Needs Improvement*, *Proficient*, or *Advanced* on one of the standard legacy MCAS tests.

Students, who demonstrate grade-level knowledge and skills in grades 3–8 ELA and/or mathematics, and who submit grade-level portfolios, are eligible to earn a score equivalent to a student who scores *Partially Meeting*, *Meeting*, or *Exceeding Expectations*.

VI. Competency Determination Portfolios

It is not anticipated that students with significant cognitive disabilities will meet the state's minimum passing standard for high school graduation and earn a Competency Determination (CD) because the vast majority are working well below grade-level expectations. However, each year a small number of students who are working at grade-level expectations and participate in the high school MCAS-Alt, are able to earn a CD by submitting a portfolio that demonstrates a level of knowledge and skills comparable to that of a student who has passed the standard grade 10 MCAS tests in ELA, mathematics, and STE. Competency portfolios are evaluated by panels of content area experts to ensure that they meet the required standard of performance in that subject. Specific requirements for submission of CD portfolios are described in the [Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt](#).

Students may elect, but are not required, to resubmit their portfolios in ELA, mathematics, and/or STE each year beyond grade 10 until they have earned an achievement level of *Needs Improvement*, or have exited publicly funded education. Table 5 shows the number of students who have earned an achievement level of *Needs Improvement* or higher on their MCAS-Alt portfolios since 2001.

Table 5. Number of Students Who Participated in the MCAS-Alt and Met the Competency Determination Requirement in Each Subject

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
ELA	8	8	11	3	13	5	10	4	8	8	3	1
Math	3	1	15	6	10	12	10	14	10	7	3	1
Science and Tech/Eng							0	3	14	12	11	5
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total (2001-2017)						
ELA	3	1	2	0	0	88						
Math	12	5	4	4	4	121						
Science and Tech/Eng	9	12	6	5	10	87						

Note: STE was added to the Competency Determination requirement beginning with the class of 2010.

VII. MCAS-Alt PPI Determinations for High Schools

In 2017, school and district accountability determinations based on the Progress and Performance Index (PPI) were given only to schools that tested students in grades 9–12.

School and district accountability determinations were not given to schools that administered the 2017 MCAS tests in grades 3–8 ELA and mathematics.

The indices shown in Table 6 identify the achievement level and associated Composite Performance Index (CPI) points, which are used to calculate PPI. In 2012, the PPI replaced Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) through the state’s Race to the Top accountability waiver as the primary method of making accountability determinations for schools and districts. Schools that administered grade 3–8 next-generation MCAS tests in ELA and Mathematics in 2017 were not assigned PPI points under the “legacy” MCAS accountability system.

In calculating the PPI, schools serving students in grades 9–12 were assigned points based on the 100-point CPI index for each student subgroup based on their achievement and growth/improvement in ELA, mathematics, and STE, and for graduation and dropout rates. High schools are expected to reduce by half the gap between the 2011 CPI baseline and proficiency for all students and for subgroups by the 2016–2017 school year.

Students assessed on the MCAS-Alt in schools serving grades 9–12 received CPI points for the purpose of determining PPI according to Table 6. This provision should not be confused with existing state requirements to meet the Competency Determination standard to earn a diploma.

Table 6
Composite Performance Index

Students taking standard "legacy" MCAS, and students submitting MCAS-Alt portfolios, in grade 10 ELA, math and high school STE tests			Students with significant cognitive disabilities submitting MCAS-Alt portfolios in grade 10 ELA and math and high school STE	
MCAS Scaled Score	Achievement Level	CPI Points Awarded	MCAS-Alt Achievement Level	CPI Points Awarded
240–280	Proficient and Advanced	100	Progressing (for certain disability types) ¹	100
230–238	Needs Improvement – High	75	Progressing (for certain disability types) ² and Emerging	75
220–228	Needs Improvement – Low	50	Awareness	50
210–218	Warning/Failing – High	25	Portfolio Incomplete	25
200–209	Warning/Failing – Low	0	Portfolio Not Submitted	0

¹ Intellectual, Sensory/Deaf and Blind, Multiple Disabilities, Autism, and Developmental Delay

² Sensory/Hard of Hearing or Deaf, Communication, Sensory/Vision Impairment or Blind, Emotional, Physical, Health, Specific Learning Disabilities, Neurological

The U.S. Department of Education required that the total number of students taking the MCAS-Alt who receive 100 CPI points and are included in PPI determination may not exceed one percent of

the total number of students assessed. To meet this requirement, the following policy changes were implemented:

1. The Department assigned 100 CPI points only to students
 - who scored *Progressing* on the MCAS-Alt; and
 - who were identified through the Student Information Management System (SIMS) as having one of the following **primary disabilities**: *Intellectual, Sensory/Deaf and Blind, Multiple Disabilities, Autism, and Developmental Delay*; and
 - whose **level of need** for special education services were reported as *High*.

The Department further prioritized among these students, as needed, to reach a maximum total of one percent, based on the nature of disability and reported level of need for special education services.

2. The Department assigned 75 CPI points to students who scored *Progressing* (from the above categories, but with lower levels of need), as well as those who were identified in SIMS as having one of the following primary disabilities: *Sensory/Hard of Hearing or Deaf, Communication, Sensory/Vision Impairment or Blind, Emotional, Physical, Health, Specific Learning Disabilities, or Neurological*.
3. All other students with disabilities assessed using the MCAS-Alt who did not score at the *Progressing* level were assigned CPI points as follows: students scoring at the *Emerging* level received 75 CPI points, *Awareness* 50 CPI points, and *Incomplete* 25 CPI points.

VIII. Resources and Professional Development for Educators

The Department sponsors approximately 17 regional training sessions annually for educators responsible for conducting the MCAS-Alt. Technical assistance is available throughout the school year from the Department's Student Assessment Services office and from members of the MCAS-Alt Teacher Network who assist their in-district colleagues and who assist at Department-sponsored training sessions.

Notices of [training opportunities](#) are sent to each school by fax, and bimonthly newsletters are sent to subscribers by email. Publications related to MCAS-Alt are available on the Department's [website](#) and are distributed at Department training sessions.

Assistance for educators conducting MCAS-Alt is available by contacting the Department by email at mcas@doe.mass.edu or by phone at 781-338-3625, or by contacting the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

Appendix A. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results by Grade and Subject

Table 7. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 3

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	49	4.1	148	12.5
Awareness	27	2.2	16	1.3
Emerging	468	38.8	77	6.5
Progressing	663	54.9	946	79.7
Partially Meeting	0	0	0	0
Meeting	0	0	0	0
Exceeding	0	0	0	0
Total	1,207	100	1,187	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 8. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 4

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	37	3.1	113	9.3
Awareness	22	1.8	11	0.9
Emerging	356	29.7	68	5.6
Progressing	783	65.4	1018	84.1
Partially Meeting	0	0	1	0.1
Meeting	0	0	0	0
Exceeding	0	0	0	0
Total	1,198	100	1,211	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 9. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 5

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	56	4.4	173	13.4
Awareness	18	1.4	14	1.1
Emerging	406	31.7	92	7.1
Progressing	802	62.6	1012	78.4
Partially Meeting	0	0	0	0
Meeting	0	0	0	0
Exceeding	0	0	0	0
Total	1,282	100	1,291	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 10. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 5 STE

	Science and Technology/ Engineering	
	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	89	7.5
Awareness	4	0.3
Emerging	149	12.6
Progressing	945	79.6
Needs Improvement	0	0
Proficient	0	0
Advanced	0	0
Total	1,187	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 11. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 6

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	62	5.4	151	12.9
Awareness	16	1.4	15	1.3
Emerging	353	30.6	89	7.6
Progressing	723	62.7	913	78.2
Partially Meeting	0	0	0	0
Meeting	0	0	0	0
Exceeding	0	0	0	0
Total	1,154	100.0	1,168	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 12. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 7

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	52	4.8	127	11.7
Awareness	11	1.0	11	1.0
Emerging	337	31.4	97	8.9
Progressing	674	62.8	855	78.4
Partially Meeting	0	0	0	0
Meeting	0	0	0	0
Exceeding	0	0	0	0
Total	1,074	100	1,090	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 13. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 8

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	59	5.4	172	15.3
Awareness	21	1.9	18	1.6
Emerging	333	30.3	83	7.4
Progressing	686	62.4	850	75.7
Partially Meeting	1	0.1	0	0
Meeting	0	0	0	0
Exceeding	0	0	0	0
Total	1,100	100	1,123	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 14. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 8 STE

	Science and Technology/ Engineering	
	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	101	9.4
Awareness	9	0.8
Emerging	134	12.5
Progressing	825	77.1
Needs Improvement	1	0.1
Proficient	0	0.0
Advanced	0	0.0
Total	1,070	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 15. 2017 MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Results: Grade 10

	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science and Technology/ Engineering ^b	
	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent ^a
Incomplete	80	8.9	124	13.6	103	15.2
Awareness	16	1.8	9	1.0	5	0.7
Emerging	298	33.0	159	17.5	94	13.9
Progressing	508	56.3	617	67.8	466	68.9
Needs Improvement	0	0.2	0	0	7	1.0
Proficient	0	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.1
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	902	100	910	100	676	100

^a Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

^b Results for grade 9 students who participated in one of the four high school STE tests in 2017 are not included here or summarized for official school, district, or state reporting until 2018, when they will be included with grade 10 students who took one of the four STE tests in 2018.

Appendix B. 2017 Participation in Standard Tests and MCAS-Alt by Grade and Subject*

Table 15. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grade 3

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Standard tests	69,805	98.3	69,906	98.3
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	0	0	0	0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	1,207	1.7	1,187	1.7
Total students assessed	71,012	100	71,093	100

Table 16. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grade 4

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Standard tests	70,221	98.3	70,229	98.3
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	0	0	1	0.0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	1,198	1.7	1,210	1.7
Total students assessed	71,419	100	71,440	100

Table 17. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grade 5

	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science and Technology/ Engineering	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent
Standard tests	69,098	98.2	69,126	98.1	69,125	98.3
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	1,282	1.8	1,291	1.9	1,187	1.7
Total students assessed	70,380	100	70,417	100	70,312	100

Table 18. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grade 6

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	68,908	98.4	68,878	98.3
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	0	0	0	0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	1,154	1.6	1,168	1.7
Total students assessed	70,062	100	70,046	100

* Tables in Appendix B include students who participated in MCAS tests, and students in grades 3–8 who participated in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests in ELA and Mathematics.

Table 19. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grade 7

	English Language Arts		Mathematics	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Standard tests	70,167	98.5	70,140	98.5
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	0	0	0	0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	1,074	1.5	1,090	1.5
Total students assessed	71,241	100	71,230	100

Table 20. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grade 8

	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science and Technology/ Engineering	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Standard tests	70,135	98.4	70,062	98.4	69,971	98.5
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	1	0.0	0	0	1	0.0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	1,099	1.6	1,123	1.6	1,069	1.5
Total students assessed	71,235	100	71,185	100	71,041	100

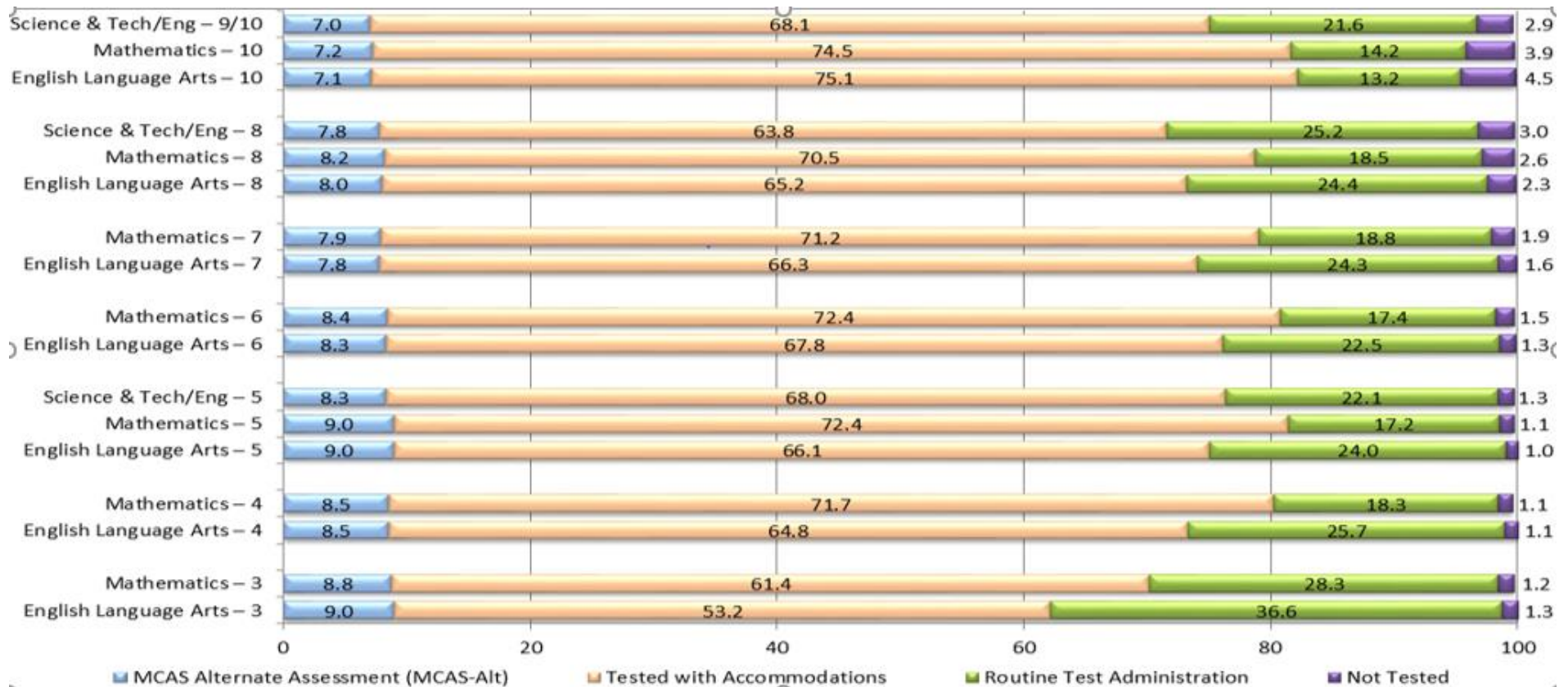
Table 21. Participation in 2017 MCAS and MCAS-Alt: Grades 10

	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science and Technology/ Engineering ^a	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent ^a	Number	Percent
Standard tests	69,366	98.7	69,430	98.7	67,387	99.0
MCAS-Alt, based on grade-level achievement standards	2	0	1	0	8	0.0
MCAS-Alt, based on alternate achievement standards	900	1.3	909	1.3	668	1.0
Total students assessed	70,268	100	70,340	100	68,063	100

^a Grade 10 STE includes students in grades 9 and 10 who participated in any of the four subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, and Technology/Engineering) and were continuously enrolled in the state from fall of grade 9 through spring of grade 10.

Appendix C: 2017 Participation Rate and Method of Participation by Students with Disabilities*

(Percentages of total students with disabilities in each grade)



* Appendix C includes students who participated in standard MCAS and MCAS-Alt tests. Grade 10 STE includes students in grades 9 and 10 who participated in any of the four subjects (Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, and Technology/Engineering).

Appendix D. Achievement Levels and Descriptors shown below are reported for each assessed subject for MCAS Legacy and Next Generation test. MCAS-Alt scores are based on the *Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands* (see Appendix E). All MCAS-Alt assessments are based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

High School and STE Achievement Level and Descriptor ("Legacy" MCAS)	Grades 3-8 Achievement Level and Descriptor ("Next-Generation" MCAS)
Advanced* Student demonstrates a comprehensive and in-depth understanding in the content area and provides sophisticated solutions to complex problems at grade-level expectations.	Exceeding Expectations Students exceed grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding and are academically well prepared to succeed at the next grade level.
Proficient* Student demonstrates a solid understanding of challenging subject matter in the content area and solves a wide variety of problems at grade-level expectations.	Meeting Expectations Students meets grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding and are academically prepared to succeed at the next grade level.
Needs Improvement* Student demonstrates a partial understanding of subject matter in the content area and solves some simple problems at grade-level expectations.	Partially Meeting Expectations Student partially meets grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding. May need coordinated assistance to succeed at the next grade level.
*In order to earn a Competency Determination, students must achieve a score of either <i>Proficient</i> on the grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests; or a score of <i>Needs Improvement</i> , and satisfy the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan; for Science and Technology Engineering students must achieve a score of <i>Needs Improvement</i> on one of four high school STE tests.	

MCAS-Alt Achievement Level Descriptors (for all grades)

Awareness	The student demonstrates very little understanding of learning standards in the content area (as indicated in the alternate assessment portfolio). The student requires extensive prompting and assistance, and performance is primarily inaccurate.
Emerging	The student demonstrates a simple understanding of a limited number of learning standards in the content area at below-grade-level expectations (as indicated in the alternate assessment portfolio). The student requires frequent prompting and assistance, and performance is limited and inconsistent.
Progressing	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of a limited number of learning standards in the content area, and addresses below-grade-level expectations (as indicated in the alternate assessment portfolio). The student appears to be receiving challenging instruction and is steadily learning new skills, concepts, and content. The student requires minimal prompting and assistance, and the performance is fundamentally accurate.

Appendix E. MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands

	1	2	3	4	5
Level of Complexity	Portfolio strand reflects little or no basis in, or is unmatched to, curriculum frameworks learning standard(s) required for assessment.	Student primarily addresses social, motor, and communication “access skills” during instruction based on curriculum frameworks learning standards in this strand.	Student addresses curriculum frameworks learning standards that have been modified below grade-level expectations in this strand.	Student addresses a narrow sample of curriculum frameworks learning standards (1 or 2) at grade-level expectations in this strand.	Student addresses a broad range of curriculum frameworks learning standards (3 or more) at grade-level expectations in this strand.

	M	1	2	3	4
Demonstration of Skills and Concepts	The portfolio strand contains insufficient information to determine a score.	Student's performance is primarily inaccurate and demonstrates minimal understanding in this strand (0–25% accurate) .	Student's performance is limited and inconsistent with regard to accuracy and demonstrates limited understanding in this strand (26–50% accurate) .	Student's performance is mostly accurate and demonstrates some understanding in this strand (51–75% accurate) .	Student's performance is accurate and is of consistently high quality in this strand (76–100% accurate) .
Independence	The portfolio strand contains insufficient information to determine a score.	Student requires extensive verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (0–25% independent) .	Student requires frequent verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (26–50% independent) .	Student requires some verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (51–75% independent) .	Student requires minimal verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (76–100% independent) .
Self-Evaluation	The portfolio strand does not show evidence of self-correction, task-monitoring, goal-setting, and reflection in this content area.	Student infrequently self-corrects monitors, sets goals, and reflects in this content area— only one example of self-evaluation was found in this strand.	Student self-corrects monitors, sets goals, and reflects in this content area—multiple examples of self-evaluation were found in this strand.		
Generalized Performance		Student demonstrates knowledge and skills in one context, or uses one approach and/or method of response and participation in this strand.	Student demonstrates knowledge and skills in multiple contexts, or uses multiple approaches and/or methods of response and participation in this strand.		